



NATIONAL PTA AND HISPANIC HERITAGE FOUNDATION TO SCREEN DOCUMENTARY “UNDERWATER DREAMS” DURING 2014 ANNUAL NATIONAL PTA CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION IN AUSTIN

New feature film tells epic story of four Latino teens who built an underwater robot and beat engineering powerhouse MIT in a robotics competition

Austin, TX – (June 17, 2014) National PTA and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (HHF) will host a free screening of the feature film “[Underwater Dreams](#),” a new documentary by award-winning filmmaker Mary Mazzio and narrated by actor Michael Peña, from 7 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, June 21, at the Austin Convention Center in Ballroom D. The film chronicles the compelling and inspirational story of four teenage boys, the sons of Mexican immigrants, who entered a sophisticated underwater robotics competition, going up against the likes of engineering powerhouse MIT – and winning. The screening is being held in conjunction with the [2014 Annual National PTA Convention and Exhibition](#). Registration is required to attend the screening. To register to participate, click [here](#).

“The message of this important film is in direct alignment with HHF’s mission and belief that we need to encourage youth to reach their potential and innovate under any circumstance,” said Jose Antonio Tijerino, President of HHF, National PTA Board Member, and Diversity Committee Member for PTA. “This is a story about what youth are capable of when they are challenged to solve problems and explore ideas. This story is what America was built on and what America needs to move forward – innovation. We need to leverage all of the talent our great country has to offer, including the youngest, fastest growing and promising segment of our population – Latinos. We strongly believe that Latinos can fill the skills gap crisis we are facing in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), and this film showcases the talent that is available. We appreciate National PTA and President Otha Thornton for working with us to host this screening and thank Mary Mazzio for telling this inspiring story.”

Mazzio is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and Olympic athlete. Her previous films include “The Apple Pushers” (about food deserts and immigrant street card vendors); “TEN9EIGHT,” which tells the stories of inner-city teen entrepreneurs; and “A Hero for Daisy,” which chronicles the 1976 protest by Yale women athletes that changed American college sports forever. For more information about her production company, visit www.50eggs.com/about-50-eggs/.

The story of “Underwater Dreams” begins when two energetic high school science teachers, on a whim, decide to enter their high school, a Title I school where most of the students live in poverty, into a sophisticated underwater robotics competition sponsored by NASA and the Office of Naval Research, among others. Only four boys signed up for the competition, but once assembled, with enthusiasm and verve, they started calling oceanic engineers for design help. They were advised that their underwater robot would require glass syntactic flotation foam. Short on money, all they could afford was PVC pipe

from Home Depot and some duct tape. After a few test runs of their robot (aptly named Stinky), the team was confident that they would not come in last at the event, so they all piled into a beat up van to head to the competition. The boys entered the main pool area, seeing college teams in matching gear with robots sponsored by big companies. Feeling a bit overwhelmed, the boys put Stinky in the water for a test run. The PVC did not hold up; the robot leaked and sunk. The boys put their heads together and hilariously came up with brilliant solutions. Fast forward to a shocking result – this rag-tag high school team of undocumented Mexican boys did what no one thought possible; they beat MIT and other Goliaths in their path. The competition, however, was only the beginning. These boys forged a legacy that could not have been imagined – a legacy of aspiration, activism and dreamers.

AMC Theatres will release “Underwater Dreams” on July 11 when it will be available for guests at AMC Burbank in Los Angeles and AMC Empire 25 in New York. In addition, beginning July 19, AMC will host community screenings free of charge for schools, non-profits and other communities whose members would be inspired and entertained by this movie. Requests for community screenings can be submitted via the film’s website, www.UnderwaterDreamsFilm.com, or by email, requests@50eggs.com.

To view a trailer of “Underwater Dreams,” visit <https://vimeo.com/97377301>.

About the NPTA

[National PTA®](http://NationalPTA.org) comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

About HHF

The Hispanic Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit originally established by the White House in 1987, inspires, prepares, positions and connects minority leaders in the classroom, community and workforce to meet America’s priorities. HHF also promotes cultural pride, accomplishment, and the great promise of the community through public awareness campaigns seen by millions. HHF has been recognized by The White House, Congress, Fortune 500 companies and other countries in Latin America. HHF is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has offices in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, and the LOFT Institute is housed at Michigan State University (Visit www.HispanicHeritage.org.) Follow Hispanic Heritage Foundation on Facebook and HHFoundation on Twitter.

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